

leave a light on by HolisticPanda

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Summary:

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leave a light on

It takes awhile for his brain to register the insistent tapping against his window, and even longer for said brain to give him the signal to wake up. Bleary eyes squint towards the alarm clock resting on his night stand, and he groans at the numbers 12:28 staring back at him.

“You've gotta be fucking kidding me,” Lucas groans, slamming a hand over his face. He'd only just gotten to bed a little over an hour ago, and even though school was out, he still needed to get his beauty rest.

As he slowly returns to the land of the living, the tapping noise develops into a consistent pattern that he eventually recognizes for what it is—Morse code. M, A, X. Max.

Like he's just been doused with a bucket of ice water, he springs out of bed and rushes to open his window. In seconds she's inside, making a beeline for the warmth he'd left behind.

“Jesus Christ it's cold,” she sighs, kicking off her shoes and sliding beneath his blankets. “Close the window, will you?”

He does as she asks and then stares back at her incredulously, because what the hell? “Max, it's 12:30 in the morning.”

She rolls her eyes and huffs irritably. “Trust me, I know.”

“You shouldn't be traveling alone at night. What if something had happened to you out there? You know better.”

“I'd take my chances with a demogorgan than spend another second hearing Billy and my stepdad go at it any day.”

He feels his anger—along with the rest of his arguments—die in his throat. Lately her stepbrother had begun fighting back against his father, and to call the house a warzone when they fought would be a massive understatement. “Again?”

She shrugs a little and motions for him to join her in bed, which he does (albeit hesitantly). She's still freezing, so biting her lip, she

slides her hands under his shirt and places them directly against his skin. "Jesus! Max!" he yelps, jumping away from her.

"Well, you're warm!" she pouts, trying to appear forlorn but unable to completely hide the mischievous glint in her eyes. He can only sigh in response, because when it comes to her he's completely powerless. And worse, she knows it.

He wraps his arms around her, hugging her tightly to his chest in an attempt to help her warm up. This was the third time in as many weeks that she'd popped up in the middle of the night, and by now he was growing used to it. Sometimes things at home would become a little too much and she'd pop over just to get away for awhile.

They don't usually talk much about why she's there; she wants to forget, and he wants her to. It's an odd dichotomy; it makes him happy that he's the person she trusts the most, but he also wishes that her family was happy and she didn't need to lean on him in the first place.

"I really don't like you walking alone at night, even to see me," he mumbles into her red hair.

"I skated over." Lucas gives her an annoyed frown, and she returns it with equal aggravation. "Look, if you don't want me to stay, I'll go." Despite saying that, she doesn't make even the slightest effort to untangle her limbs from his.

He snorts and rolls his eyes, immediately calling her bluff. "I don't think you'd leave even if I wanted you to."

"True. Guess you're stuck with me."

"Guess so." It's an argument they have almost every time she crawls through his window, if it could even be called that.

She rolls over so that he can no longer see her face and lets out a quiet breath. "I wish I could stay here. I'm always happier when I'm with you." She says it so quietly that he almost misses it, but he catches it all the same.

She'll leave first thing in the morning, while he's still sleeping and

before the first rays of light begin to peek over the horizon. She'll make the long ride back to her own house in the freezing cold, or maybe she'll just skate around Hawkins until the arcade opens and the rest of the party are awake enough to join her.

But eventually she'll have to go back home to a family that seems to find joy in screaming at each other until the only thing she can do is get away. Like usual he'll feel completely useless and angry with himself for being unable to help her, and like usual his arms will be all that he has to offer her. It's not much, and it won't fix what's broken, but he'll do anything to give her even a little happiness.

He glances down to see that she's fast asleep and pulls the blanket up so that it covers the both of them. "Me too."

Author's Note:

This pairing doesn't get enough love for some reason,
and I'm all about the underdogs :)